

STAT

Page Denied

STAT

FAILURE OF RUMANIAN AGRICULTURAL POLICYL'Economie

Paris, 19 Nov 1953

The Eastern Bloc countries are currently undergoing a severe agricultural crisis. This is a consequence of the policy of excessive industrialization imposed on the Satellites for many years by the USSR, whose industry did not by itself meet the enormous needs of the excessively large armament program undertaken by the Soviet government. Recently, a series of similar agricultural crises took place in the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and even in the USSR. The Rumanian government issued a decree, which for the most part passed unnoticed in the Western press, emphasizing the gravity of the crisis, also existing in Rumania.

Under the terms of this decree, the Presidium of the Rumanian Grand National Assembly authorizes the Council of Ministers to cede, to peasant workers with little land and large families, a certain number of agricultural lands from the state reserves for the perpetual use of the peasants in collective agricultural undertakings and for ownership.

The state reserves which the Rumanian government decided to let go had their origin in the 1945 agrarian reform. At that time, all properties above 50 hectares were confiscated. The operation involved 1.5 million hectares, of which 1.1 million hectares were distributed to 918,000 peasants. The remaining 400,000 hectares became public property, and were designated as state reserves.

That was only a beginning. In 1948 and 1949, the Communist government undertook liquidation of small properties.

The scheme thenceforth became standard, and it is found faithfully applied in all the Satellite countries. By the end of 1949, the Rumanian state reserves had been increased by some 700,000 hectares of arable land, which made the government the chief land owner in the country, with 1.2 million hectares of plowland, 3 million hectares of pasturage, and 6 million hectares of forests.

The state reserves were so enormously increased in Rumania because the Communist government, while strongly favoring the grouping of small peasants into work cooperatives modeled on the Soviet kolkhozes, was especially drawn to the idea of establishing and developing state farms. These were veritable sovkhozes, the ultimate and ideal form of Communist management.

Results have been disastrous. The state farms produced a poor crop and at great cost, as the Communist newspaper Scanteia admitted some months ago. Instead of the 40 million quintals harvested in 1938 in the present Rumanian territories, wheat production for the last 3 years has not exceeded an average of 15 to 20 million quintals. The same situation and almost identical figures are found for corn. The yields for these two cereals are very low: 6 to 7 quintals per hectare for wheat and 4 for corn, while the average yield of these two cereals in 1938 was 14 quintals per hectare. Over-all, present Rumanian agricultural production is 50 percent lower than it was before the war.

The Grand National Assembly decree, under these circumstances, is a striking confession of the failure of the state farms, whose 500,00 hectares of land are going to be distributed immediately to production cooperatives. In orthodox Communism, this is a regressive step in agricultural management and, what is still more regressive, a step toward small individual holdings.

STAT

In short, all the Satellite governments have been constrained to turn to those who are "behind the times, reactionary, and antiprogressive," to repair the disastrous consequences of the Communist agricultural policy of recent years and to avoid famine in the country.

- E N D -

STAT

- 2 -